

AAPM&R Joins CMSS' Equity Matters™—A Collaborative DEI and Anti-Racism Initiative for Physicians and Medical Leadership

AAPM&R is honored to be selected to participate in *Equity Matters™*, a joint initiative of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), to drive measurable improvements in equity by increasing physician workforce diversity and creating clinical and learning environments that are safe, inclusive and equitable. *Equity Matters™* will also seek to create an increased understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and anti-racism fundamentals using multi-modal educational tools and resources, as well as a peer advisory approach to create shared learnings within a group of stakeholder learning communities.

Deborah Venesy, MD, FAAPMR, AAPM&R President-Elect and Tom Stautzenbach, AAPM&R CEO and Executive Director, will lead this important effort for the Academy, which began in July 2021. As an inaugural participant, AAPM&R will serve as one of 42 learning community cohorts charged with addressing DEI challenges and barriers at multiple levels with the end-goal of creating a capstone project that will identify, analyze and provide actionable solutions to address the root causes of inequity in the PM&R specialty.

“One of the ways we may increase the impact psychiatry has throughout healthcare is by elevating diversity and inclusion in everything we do,” said Dr. Venesy. **“The *Equity Matters™* initiative is an important opportunity to work with other specialties to identify the underlying causes of inequity within medicine and set in place processes to correct them. I believe psychiatry has much to contribute to the conversation.”**

AAPM&R along with cohorts from academia and other medical societies will take part in an 18-month learning collaborative, with the first six-months devoted to monthly learning sessions to build the foundational knowledge of the participants and aid in the preparation of an innovation plan. Participating teams will receive faculty coaching and access to resources during the next 12-months of their innovation design and implementation, which will culminate in a capstone presentation in December 2022.



Goals for the *Equity Matters™* Learning Communities include:

- 1) Ensure that the diversity of their physician workforce reflects the intent to eliminate local health disparities.
- 2) Establish or enhance infrastructure, policies, and procedures that will yield a diverse workforce and a culture of safety, equity and inclusion in graduate medical learning environments.
- 3) Create outreach, culture, climate and educational experiences that build safety and trust in order to provide consistent deliverables in diversity, equity and inclusion for faculty and learners.
- 4) Purposefully engage educators who understand and actively create a safe and equitable learning environment for learners.
- 5) Generate data demographics of participants' organization or institution in order to assess outcomes related to DEI.
- 6) Evaluate components of *Equity Matters™* for efficacy in participants' respective organizations and institutions.

“As a CMSS Board member and Academy Executive, I have been committed to the necessity for specialty societies to truly work together, harnessing collective energies and perspectives, to tackle these defining issues,” said Tom Stautzenbach. **“Diversity and Inclusion is an organizational strategic priority**

for AAMP&R, and we've been on our D&I journey for many years. The *Equity Matters™* initiative further expands our commitment to how the Academy can make a substantial impact on the PM&R specialty and effect positive change for the future of medicine, psychiatrists and the patients they serve. We are excited and honored to be selected as an inaugural member to support this much-needed effort.”

“We are committed to the significant and sustained efforts that will be needed to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion in medicine and counter structural racism,” said Helen Burstin, MD, MPH, MACP, CEO of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies. **“Specialty societies and program director associations committed to this partnership to achieve actionable recommendations and real results.”**

Once complete, resources within the *Equity Matters™* platform will be made available to all initiative stakeholders and their respective members with CME credit provided for the completion of the DEI/anti-racism fundamental courses.

Watch for updates on the *Equity Matters™* initiative in future issues of *The Psychiatrist* and other Academy communications.